

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2015

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by .. [your name, call sign and QTH]

You can tune into the South African Radio League news bulletin on Sunday mornings at 08:15 Central African Time in Afrikaans and at 08:30 Central African Time in English on HF and on many VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. Echolink listeners can connect to ZS0JPL for a relay. A podcast is available from the League's web site.

This audio bulletin may be downloaded from the League's website at www.sarl.org.za. You will find this bulletin and previous bulletins in text format under the news link on the left-hand side of the web page. While you are there, you can sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

In the news today

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR RESULTS ON VHF?

ZS4TX CLOSES IN ON DXCC FULL HOUSE ON 7 MHZ

ICASA RULES ABOUT ZU LICENCES FOR PEOPLE OVER 25

Stay tuned for more on these and other interesting news items.

****Many would be VHFers quickly throw in the towel when they can't hear the VHF stations that some other amateurs can pick up. There is no need to despair but you could slowly improve your antenna and radio equipment until you get the desired results.

- (1) You are not going to get very far on VHF with a vertical antenna, so keep it for repeater and mobile work. As a start, construct a 5-element horizontal Yagi for 144 MHz or a 3-element for 50 MHz, and the results will inspire you to build bigger antennas with higher gain.
- (2) If you are using one of the older VHF transceivers, it may be necessary to add a low noise amplifier (LNA) to pull weak signals out of the noise.
- (3) If you are running low power, say only 25 Watts, then a RF power amplifier of 100 Watts or preferably more will make a difference. If you can't increase power or improve your receiver then the only alternative is to increase your antenna gain; stack more longer Yagi arrays.
- (4) Replace your RG-213 co-axial cable with low-loss types such as LM-400, LM-600, Eupen EC4-50 or Heliac LDF4-50A to reduce your transmission and reception losses and of course fit N-type connectors.

**** 2015 is the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. Amateur Radio celebrated UN Day with the special callsign 4U70UN from the UN Headquarters in New York, a separate country for DXCC purposes.

From 1978 to the turn of the century, 4U1UN was often on the air. However, since about 2008 the country has crept up into the Top 50 on the Most Wanted lists.

4U70UN was active for two eight-hour sessions on the last Saturday and Sunday of October. Eight operators used six portable radios and eight portable antennas from the UN Garden, making thousands of contacts in the huge pileups.

Bernie van der Walt ZS4TX needed only three countries on 7 MHz, including this one. He was anxious about the fact that they had to leave the premises at sunset both days, leaving very little common darkness between them and us. Right at the end of their Sunday session, Bernie noticed an anomaly in their listening pattern on 7 MHz CW, and managed to attract the operator's attention through the pileup. He is believed to have been the last station they worked on that band.

After completing the DXCC endorsement process on Logbook of the World, Bernie now officially needs only two countries on this band, with a total of 345 credits. His score is by far the highest single band score from South Africa, a remarkable feat on a band that is not generally regarded as a prime DX band.

**** With the publication of the new radio regulations earlier this year, the much talked about age restriction for ZU licence holders was implemented. Persons under 20 years old can write the class-B examination and if successful can hold a ZU or class-B licence until 25 years old after which, if they would like to continue with Amateur Radio, have to sit the class-A examination to qualify for a class-A (ZS/ZR licence).

During the discussion stage of this new regulation the SARL was requested to approach ICASA to review their decision, which the SARL did on two occasions when ICASA invited comments on their proposal. ICASA strongly believes that the class-B licence prime purpose was to create opportunities for young people to enter Amateur Radio and based on that premise implemented the new regulation.

The SARL requested ICASA to allow a reasonable period for ZU licences over 25 to upgrade. ICASA agreed to this. The Authority has announced that all persons over 25 years old can no longer renew their ZU licence from 1 April 2017. In a letter to the affected licencees, currently being mailed, ICASA recommends that the affected persons enrol for a class-A licence course and write the next RAE in May or October 2016

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Radio League.

**** The 85th Annual General Meeting of the Pretoria Amateur Radio Club took place on Saturday 31 October 2015. The following people were elected to serve on the committee:

Pierre Holtzhausen ZS6PJH Whitey Joubert ZS6JJJ Andre Coetzee ZS6GCA
Andre Van Tonder ZS6BRC Jean de Villiers ZS6ARA Graham Reid ZS6GJR

Louis de Wet ZS6SK Johan de Bruyn ZS6JHB Etienne Naude ZS6EFN Craig Symington ZS6RH Gawie Marias ZS6GJM

Congratulations to the newly elected committee and all the best for the year ahead. A hearty thanks to the outgoing committee for their work and contributions during the past year. The club chairman will be elected at the next committee meeting.

**** Applications for membership of the SARL have been received from the following persons:

ZR6PAN : Johan M Pansegrouw ZS6NVZ : Petrus Nicholas Johannes van Zyl

The following clubs have submitted applications for affiliation. ZS5HAM : Highway Amateur Radio Club

Any objections to the acceptance of the applications must reach the Secretary before or on the Tuesday after the bulletin.

Membership of the SARL currently stands at 1586 plus 41 affiliated clubs

**** In this week's propagation report, Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that solar activity is expected to be at low to moderate levels. Active Sunspot 2443 has a complex magnetic configuration and may be the source of M-class solar flares.

If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around 62.

The 20 to 10 metre bands will provide lots of DX fun, especially during the late afternoons and in the evenings.

Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

**** The SARL monthly youth net will be on the air today at 17:00 on 7 070 kHz. Join SARL Youth coordinator, Koos Fick ZR6KF for the young people get-together on the air. Note the new starting time is 17:00 local time

**** And now for the diary of events

7 November - the RaDAR contest 8 November Monthly Youth Net with Koos Fick 8 November - the PEARS HF contest 10 November closing date for articles for the November/December Radio ZS 16 November closing date for amendments and changes of contact details for the 2016 contest handbook.

To end this bulletin, a recap of our main news items this morning.

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You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio magazine programme 'Amateur Radio Today' at 10:00 Central African Time.

The programme can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band and on 7 205 kHz and 17 760 kHz AM. There is also a podcast available from Dick Stratford, ZS6RO. A rebroadcast can be heard on Monday evenings at 18:30 Central African Time on 3 230 kHz AM.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za. Sentechn sponsors the radio transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Etienne Naude, ZS6EFN, edited by Dick Stratford, ZS6RO and read by Dave Reece, ZS1DFR.

Thank you for listening

From the entire news team, best wishes for the week ahead.

73

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